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image is not commenced and that the film is not at any part exhausted of the silver salt that can be reduced." All our experiments at the LICK Observatory since 1888 have led to a different conclusion.*

It is, therefore, very gratifying to us that Captain ABNEY's experiments confirm our own. His conclusions are that the chemical action is *not*, generally, proportional to the exposure for a constant light (on bromide plates); or, to take a special case, that "*the sum of a large number of small (short) exposures was not equal to the same exposure given at one time.*" These conclusions have an important bearing on the theory of photographic photometry in general and on the practical matter of determining the magnitudes of stars by measures of their images on negative plates in particular.

E. S. H.

THE SYSTEM OF 61 CYGNI.

Dr. WILSING of Potsdam has recently announced to the Berlin Academy of Sciences that he has detected a periodic variation of the distance between the two bright components of the star 61 *Cygni*. In the process of reducing several hundred photographic observations, taken in 1890-93 for determining the parallax of this star (one of the nearest to our system), he found that the distance between the two components varied from 20''.8 to 21''.1 and back to 20''.8 in about twenty-two months. He is inclined to attribute this relative motion to the presence in that system of one or more bodies which cannot be seen with our large telescopes.

W. W. C.

* E. S. HOLDEN, in *Bulletin Congrès Astrophotographique*, Vol. I, page 297, August 15, 1889, and LICK Observatory Reports on the Eclipses of January and of December, 1889. S. W. BURNHAM, in LICK Observatory Report of the Eclipse of December, 1889, pages 8 and 35. J. M. SCHAEFERLEK, *op. cit.*, page 35; and Terrestrial Atmospheric Absorption of the Photographic Rays of Light, page 3, equation (1). A. O. LEUSCHNER, in *Publications A. S. P.*, Vol. II, page 7 (see especially page 9 and the paragraph in italics, page 14).